

583 between 500 and 600 marks in the south. Devaluation of the money, which has also taken place in Africa, has considerably raised the price in comparison to what it was formerly.

583 The purchase price cannot be paid in money (spear money) alone, in cattle alone, or in any specific type of goods alone; 4% instead, all the objects of exchange which are in circulation 435 must be represented. Thus, in 1906, for instance, the following things were paid for a woman in the Fang region:

6,000 spears	420. -- marks
12 rifles	120. -- marks
2 vats of powder	4. -- marks
70 choppers	70. -- marks
2 sheep	50. -- marks
2 iron pots	8. -- marks
10 pieces of cloth	40. -- marks
5 hats	10. -- marks
13 kettles of salt ②	
2. -- marks	26. -- marks
2 knives	2. -- marks
2 packages of beads	2. -- marks
2 tobacco pipes	50 mark
2 packages of flints	50 mark
1 hatful of buttons	50 mark
	753. 50 marks /261/

[948] Any existing illegitimate children go along with the marriage bargain. In fact, the bridegroom has to pay 500 spears for a boy and 1,000 spears for a girl; incidentally, he is only too glad to do so, because each child means an addition to his wealth.

● 578 I shall not go into a discussion of the endless number of quarrels that arise on the occasion of a marriage, especially when 583 the entire purchase price is not paid at once. Nor shall I speak of the fact that the girl's father likes to steer his daughter, even if she is in love with another, into the hands of the man who can pay the most or the most readily. All this would lead too far afield.

606 If the girl stays in her parents house and if the payment of 583 the purchase price extends over weeks and months, the suitor has 584

- 551 Nkumu. "Nkumu sa?" Nkumu Bawu. "Bawu sa?" "Bawu Otoo."
 539 "Otoo sa?" "Otoo Kuboo." "Kuboo sa?" "Kuboo Emwi."
 211 "Emwi sa?" "Emwi Abungo." "Abungo sa?" "Abungo a Schiele."
 "Schiele sa?" "Schiele Maa." "Maa sa?" "Maa Makama."
 "Makama sa?" Makama

me nga buge nana ab:
 who lived to break (of the) mother the leg.
tsks
tsas (onomatopoetic).

551 A remnant of the old aversion of all primitive peoples to
 578 mention names, because thereby some kind of mischief might re-
 sult, can still be observed among the Fangwe. /287/ They do
 not like to utter their names before strangers, and they find a
 question about their full names (in other words, including that of
 the father) tactless, indeed, almost insulting, as I frequently noticed
 among the Fang who had not had any contact with outsiders. It
 is also an insult in every respect to remind someone of his ancestors.
 This need not even be done by name -- since, after all, they do
 not always know the names -- but can be done with just the words:
 I shall "show" you your ancestors. This is taken as a threat of
 sorcery, that is, secret murder, and as though one were telling his
 enemy in advance that he would kill him and transport him to his
 ancestors. Such an insult is often avenged with the sword.

2. Child Rearing

861 The child is reared by means of precept and example, rarely
 by threats, and almost never -- at least only in case of major of-
 fenses against morality, such as theft, for instance -- by means of
 corporal punishment. The result must be termed an extremely good
 one; Fangwe children behave more tactfully and better than our
 children of the same age.

867 We are informed by some "experts on the Negro's soul" that
 861 the Blacks have no sense of honor. A glance at their family life,
 however, teaches us the opposite. In rearing the child, the

[857]
[854]
[291]
(142)



Fig. 87. Boy about Seven Carrying
a Child, Bébai (Esieng Family), South
Cameroon.

861 everything that is on his mind. Also, any kind of influence in
573 the family unit is wielded only by the chief wife and /291/ even
by her only to a limited extent. In all problems of life the father,
as head of the family, remains the real friend and counselor of
his son, as does the mother for her daughter.

861 In this way the love of the parents gently leads the child
573 through the realm of youth. However, once the boy has matured
578 into a young man, the obstinacy with which nature has to a spe-
626 cial degree endowed the Fangwe, sometimes asserts itself even
in the face /Fig. 88 appears here in the original text/ of paternal
authority. In such a case, it is sometimes only the most effec-
tive and most feared means of education that helps to lead the

[Text continues on page 168]

661 rebellious son back to gentler modes of behavior, namely, the
 593 public curse. The curse (ebdila o); verb, a bido) may be pro-
 571 nounced by the father or the mother upon the son, as well as by
 626 the eldest son as the father's representative, especially after the
 father's death, upon a younger brother. In the majority of cases,
 however, it is the father who pronounces the curse upon his son.
 The cause for such a pronouncement is continual disobedience,
 for instance, if the son, despite repeated warnings, takes advan-
 tage of the father's wives. The father then stands in the middle
 of the village square in order to be heard by the people, usually
 in the morning when they are all at home, or he summons them
 all to the meeting house and speaks to them somewhat as follows:
 "This person, my son, continually acts counter to my commands,
 etc.; therefore from this time on he shall be successful in noth-
 ing, he shall acquire no more things (through purchase and trade
 of gifts), he shall have no success in hunting; when he goes to a
 girl she shall 'look upon him as dirt' and grant him no love. For
 he shall be cursed." A definite formula is not prescribed in most
 regions; only in the north of the Pangwe region they say: "ma
yda(e) oa" (Jaunde), that is, "I curse you." /292/

In most cases, the curse actually is followed by the conse-
 quences threatened by the father, at least insofar as they con-
 cern the son's social position. News of the curse spreads every-
 where, and nobody wants to have anything more to do with the
 cursed one; wherever he goes he is looked at askance or even
 heaped with abuse and ridicule. In his father's village he will be
 completely unacceptable. As a result, the son is soon tired of this
 unbearable state of affairs and now tries to induce his father to
 remove the curse. He requests him through friends or relatives
 to remove the curse from him, or he approaches his father through
 his mother, but then by way of her brother, since "she is afraid
 of her husband."

If, in response to these requests and the son's promise that he
 will improve, the father is prepared to nullify the curse, the son
 must first of all -- if he is an adult -- pay him a goat or -- if he
 is not an adult -- a chicken. Contrary to the usual custom of
 adding every piece of livestock to the marriage portion for more
 wives, the animal paid as compensation by the son is consumed by

861 the parents and relatives. Thereafter, the son is summoned to
 593 appear in the village the next day. The father again assembles
 626 all the people in the meeting house and makes a long speech in
 578 which he rehearses the entire affair from his point of view down
 to the smallest details. Finally, at the conclusion of his speech,
 he touches upon the actual purpose of the gathering and proceeds
 to remove the curse. The formula with which he does so is ap-
 proximately as follows:

[539] ma tē'i matē'i, ma kābe ma,
 I have imposed curse (1) (?), I disengage myself (from

1. matē'i = the imposed curse, a va
matē'i = to remove the (imposed)
 curse; the root a tē'i = to tear oneself
 away from, to depart from home,
otitē'i = star (see Vol. II, pages 85 and 86).

ma nīme ma, -- otīe
 it), I make straight myself -- (into the) water

nkīi i; Chorus: mān.
 down. Chorus: Ready, past.

The texts of the formulas, which are frequently extended through the introduction of comparisons and which do not, of course, correspond word for word, are evidently all very old since they are very hard to understand and sometimes not intelligible at all.

[201] At the same time the father spits into his son's hand to indicate that what he took away from him by means of his words (symbolized by the spittle) he is putting back in his power (hand), or the father bites off -- this is the procedure among the Jaunde --
 [824] a piece of the stalk of a Costus (Zingiberaceae) and spits it out. In so doing he casts out all the bitterness from his heart (Costus stalk is bitter).

579 Furthermore, a curse may be pronounced by the first wife
 595 against her husband, in case he treats her badly and always neglects her in favor of others. The curse is either pronounced

578 publicly, as in the case of the paternal curse, or in the field
595 when the women are among themselves. /293/

769 A droll effect is created when the souls are cursed by their
578 descendants. The curse is pronounced at the ancestral feast if it
is believed that the souls of the ancestors no longer care about
the living, and the curse is also revoked on the same occasion.
Although, as ancestors, the souls were more elevated persons who
actually cannot be cursed, here is another instance where might
comes before right, for after death the souls are powerless on earth,
as we know.

578 Finally, there is a belief in secret curses, and thus, if people
are constantly unlucky in life, they are sometimes afraid that they
are being cursed by this or that person.

The most terrible curse is that which was pronounced by
Nsambe (God) upon human beings when they committed the first
major offense against his paternal will. As described in Volume
II, page 59 /Ed., not translated/, the curse is symbolically
erased during the cult celebration.

3. Children's Games (1)

- 524
[113] 1. See G. Tessimann, "Die Kinderspiele
der Pangwe" /The Children's Games of
the Pangwe/, in the Baessler-Archiv, Vol.
2, No. 5-6, p. 250. The children's games
are discussed there in detail.

I divide children's games into two major classes: the generally imitative games, and the independent games. Of the former I distinguish three groups: first, gymnastic games which imitate the movements of adults (running, sport, and dancing); second, war and hunting games which imitate the main occupations, not to say professions, of adults; and third, all the rest of the imitative games. The independent games, which are on a higher level, I divide again into three groups: first, toy games, that is, games that are played with objects and do not imitate any

524 Thus, each player must take care that his opponent does not get into a weak compartment with his last stone or, in cases not to be avoided, that the preceding compartment is strong.

On the average, the Pangwe do not play the stone game particularly well, but there are individuals -- even women -- who 539 have developed their playing skill to a veritable mastery. In particular, a number of Bulu are famous as eminent adepts in this field 578 in the Ntum territory, and a number of jocular stories that are as widespread as their fame have been coined about them. The majority of these stories are attributed to the "champion" of the Pangwe players, Bekena a Mpfa, the son of Mpfa Mangöö. Sometimes these stories are recited during the game by the more skilled player in an extraordinarily rapid, even tone, perhaps with the intention of distracting and confusing the less assured opponent. As regards their content, these stories pour the most vitriolic scorn upon less skilled players.

Satiric Song of the Ntum

ma ma nga lö bekö'na, bekö'na a mpfa, ndüman
I, I played (with) Beköna, Beköna of Mpfa, son

a mpfa-mangöö. /313/ nüm kaa manü niene: ma
of Mpfa-Mangöö. Man without teeth, he says: I

ke ma dzi bekö be zök; mĩ'nga kaa
go to eat hides of elephants; woman without

makü'n niene: ma töbö o kpí; ukükute
behind, she says: I sit down on stool; crazy

džim a nga wü sö' a bĩm,
thing, it lets pass (a) Sao antelope on hunting drive,

a lige isia a kōn bekö'na a mpfa, ndüman
it leaves his father sick Beköna of Mpfa, son

524
539
578
a mpfā, ndīman a mpfā mangōō, niene:
of Mpfa, son of Mpfa-Mangōō, he says: Come now,

bōte, mi adān a kābo (or a ngōngō):
people, you surpass to speak

ye tada a nga kōn bekōna, niene:
Interrogative: father, he is sick (of) Bekōna, he thus:

a dāi sō, kō ma nga vui tada
to eat Sao antelope?; but I killed (for the) father (a)

ogbūn a bīm o ngūz, tada a
dwarf antelope on hunting drive yesterday, father he

tame dāi ogbūn.
must eat dwarf antelope.

Freely translated: I was once playing the stone game with Bekōna, the well-known Bekōna-Mpfa who is the son of Mpfa-Mangōō. He said: "You really resemble an old man who has no teeth and wants to eat elephant's hide (1), or a woman who has no

[262]

1. The notoriously thick and tough elephant's hide is actually eaten by some people (with teeth!), after being well boiled.

backside and sits down on the hard wooden stool, and thirdly you resemble the stupid noodle who on the hunting drive lets a Sao antelope (2) pass by and knows his father to be sick at home, infirm

[265]

2. The black-rumped duikerbok, Cephalophus dorsalis Gray.

from the disease that came from Bekōna-Mpfa, the son of Mpfa-Mangōō." Well, in that case one simply says: "Come now, you people, you're talking altogether too much poppycock! Even if

524 my father is suffering from the Bekōna disease, does he absolutely
539 have to eat Seo antelope meat? After all, yesterday on the hunting
578 drive I shot a dwarf antelope for my father; let my father first eat
the dwarf antelope!"

Satiric song of the Fang (beginning as above)

...mī'nīŋga kaa makh'h, niene; ma bōde
...Woman no backside, she says: I wear

asō ukūkute dūm, oa lige isūa akō e
raffia apron; crazy thing, you leave your father sick with

behō; wōna; oa he a wūa ngō' akūh.
boils; you say: you go to place stones in the game.

... You resemble a woman who has no backside and wants to wear a raffia apron (the large horsetail-like raffia apron is not suitable for /314/ such a woman). And in addition, you stupid fool, your father is lying at home sick with boils!" In that case one would say (1): "Just place your stones, we shall see!"

1. The translation of wōna by "one" is justified because wōna is in a sense directed at the listener.

Satiric Song of the Ntum

o lō za? o lō fē za?
You play (with) whom? You play more (with) whom?

bō lō, bō lō! ngā naō'la; mī'nīŋga
People play, people play! Madame Naōla (said): Woman

kaa mebī'n niene; o vū ma mvōt and
without calves, she says: you put me brass wire (about) as

bo nga vū, ntsāma-obiāh.
they put (about) Ntsama-Obiang.

524 defeat an average player (in the comparison, the Sao antelope)?
 529 After all, just yesterday I defeated a totally inferior player (in the
 534 comparison, the dwarf antelope)! That has given my father sufficient
 revenge for the time being (in the comparison, enough
 to eat).

We see a cornucopia of ridicule poured forth here. Magnificent comparisons! Pithy expressions! Negro poetry with an elemental force!

Game of Chance (abía, Jaunde, Bulu)

525 Like the stone game, the game of chance was not an indigenous
 177 cultural possession of the Pangwe. From the Maka (Makie in
 184 Jaunde) in the east through the mediation of the Mwogenianga kin
 group (probably Bene) on the upper Nyong it came to the core of
 the Bene, who transmitted it to the Jaunde and Bulu. In only the
 most recent times, the Ntum have become acquainted with it
 through Jaunde and Bene traders who came to them in the service
 of the Whites. Nonetheless, I myself have seen people engaged in
 this game only once, in 1907 in the vicinity of the northern Ntum
 region. Among the Fang the game is unknown.

525 The game of chance is played with small circular playing
 disks (esí; plural, besí, derived from esí "goods," because, according
 to the Pangwe, they decide whether the players are winning or
 losing and hence, as it were, bring in the money in the form of
 goods, trade items) which are simply cut out of calabash rinds
 (Fig. 117, a). Furthermore, the game requires counters (mvi í),
 531 of which each player must bring his own. They are produced from
 532 the hard rinds of the fruit from a tree called abám by the Jaunde,
 and on their smooth upper surface (outside of the fruit) they bear
 attractive patterns of various kinds, animal forms, or human figures,
 which, like the edge, are carved in relief (Fig. 117, b-d).
 /Fig. 117 appears here in the original text. / 316/

The number of players that can participate is unlimited, but
 there must be at least four.

To play (a dǫ abía), a basketry plate is also needed, into which
 are placed once and for all seven playing disks (seven again as a

525

3 counters lie face up, the one counter lying face down;

with five players

if all the disks lie face down or up to three disks inclusive lie face up and

- 1 counter lies face up, the one counter lying face up,
- 2 counters lie face up, the two counters lying face up,
- 3 counters lie face up, the three counters lying face up,
- 4 counters lie face up, the one counter lying face down; /317/

if four to seven disks lie face up and

- 1 counter lies face up, the one counter lying face up,
 - 2 counters lie face up, the three counters lying face down,
 - 3 counters lie face up, the two counters lying face down,
 - 4 counters lie face up, the one counter lying face down.
- Put in words, the matter may be expressed as follows.

- 1. In case all the disks are lying face down or up to three disks inclusive are lying face up, the team on the right loses only if the counters of all players less one (total minus one) are lying face up.
- 2. In case four to seven disks are lying face up, the team to the right always loses if more than one chip is lying face up.

Now it may also happen that four players cannot be assembled. In that case, three players help themselves out by putting down a blind counter for the missing fourth. If this counter alone comes out the winner, the throw naturally does not count; on the other hand, if it is the second winner, the share of the dummy falls to the co-winner.

The stakes must be fixed before the basketry plate is raised. Each player must place a certain fairly high value (for instance, 2, 5, or 10 marks), usually in the form of goods, on a pile, which the winners share equally. If there is only one winner, he gets the whole pile. The losses suffered by a Negro in the game are considerable. If he has no more money with him, he has his luckier [426] friends give him an advance in the hope of winning at a later throw and paying back the loan. In this process some of them go so deeply ●[578] in debt that in the end they must leave their wives with the creditor, and sometimes they come to blows, even to homicide; blood revenge

525 and wars have frequently been the consequences of the gambling
578 mania. Although in more recent times the game of chance has
been prohibited in the area controlled by the German govern-
ment, nonetheless considerable homage is paid the gambling
demon in secret.

525 In order to insure luck at the game, a whole series of medi-
cines is made, which, according to the view already familiar
177 to us, transfer the properties of plants to the counters; for in-
stance, plants which make them burning hot (Boehmeria,
924 Urticaceae), sharp, peppery (Spilanthes, Compositae), and
strong (Carpolabia, Polygalaceae). Others are intended to pre-
serve for the owner the objects that he has put down as his
stake in the game. In this category we find burrs (Desmodium)
and winding Araceae. /318/ /Fig. 118 appears here in the
original text. /

5. Wrestling

526 Wrestling matches are very frequent, especially in the
southern Pangwe region, both to settle personal quarrels -- in
this case the defeated wrestler was formerly sometimes
squeezed half to death and cases of death have even occurred --
as well as for sport. In the latter case one might actually speak
of a sports festival to which the drum summons young and old,
man and woman, from afar. I shall dispense with a detailed
description, however,

In wrestling, certain rules of the game are observed, for
instance, that both wrestlers must be as nearly matched as
possible, and this determines whether they turn down the chal-
lenge (a kán nǎŋ) or take it up (a mǎm nǎŋ).

Our picture (Fig. 118) represents a snapshot of such wrestlers
(nǎŋ I, from a sǎn = to wrestle). To the left one can see a group
of young men waiting (a jǎn) to be challenged (a lǎŋ = to
challenge). Before the match the wrestler rubs dust onto the
palms of his hands and his arms (a dǔk mǎŋ) lǔk enǎm = to rub
dust [on the] arm) to make them less slippery.

613 the same for the third grandson. The group of the sons' three families
614 constitutes what is called etuna or aval. The tribe (ayoh) gives its
name to all the families which have been established since its founder.

614 Social relations are rare with foreign tribes, the tribe forming a
609 homogeneous whole where the stranger is received only with reserve
518 and when he shows goods which prove that his visit has no other aim
but to come and look for a woman to marry. The [92] tribes are
often hostile to one another, and while they no longer can make war,
this hostility is still demonstrated by an atmosphere of haggling which
always forces the weakest to give way. Several tribes have thus had to
leave the N'Djolié region to settle farther downstream on the Ogooué
because they could no longer live beside their neighbors.

514 On the other hand, visits among members of one tribe are frequent,
presents are exchanged, and wives are bought.

761 Death (awu). Death is regarded as a change of village. After his
715 death, a person has become an inhabitant of the big village created
by Nzame beyond the earth. There he will find the members of his
family who already live there, and therefore he follows a very wide
trail which leads him to the bank of the river Endam where his rela-
tives who died before him come to await him. It may be that the cross-
ing of the river is not immediate, and the dead man may have to stay
for several days on the bank, which happens especially to people of whom
the bivur have made human victims.

763 The dying person (edzegela) is attended by women who, when death
has occurred, announce it on coming out of the hut, where all the in-
habitants of the village then assemble. The corpse is taken from its
bed and laid on the ground on mats; it is washed, rubbed with oil, and
clothed in a white loincloth, then rolled in the mats and in pieces of
bark, and tied. It stays this way in the hut until the grave is dug.

764 Funeral ceremonies immediately follow death. The wrapped body is
carried by two men to the place of burial. The inhabitants of the vil-
lage follow, one behind the other, and are present at the interment,
which is done with a vine holding the body so that it does not fall
suddenly to the bottom of the hole dug to receive it. The grave is
oriented east-west, or is dug parallel to the course of the river which
flows by the village, the head of the dead being placed upstream or
to the east, the feet downstream or toward the west, so that the dead
will lie in the direction of the river Endam. Before the grave is filled,

162 We have been able to define the characteristics of this demographic crisis, of which the Fang as a whole are aware. These are a drop in the population, which is more or less checked according to the region and circumstances; a lack of balance between the number of men and of women -- the sex ratio rising rapidly at the level of the oldest age groups -- and a more marked aging of the feminine population; an insufficient demographic basis and at the same time a high infant mortality. And it is the lack of children and the sudden importance acquired by women (conditioned by their number as well as by the general movement of social evolution) of which the villagers complain, far more than they criticize the inadequacy of sanitary equipment. In a society where the number [that is, the size of the groups] differentiates the groupings in a hierarchical system, and permits personal pre-eminence, the acute phases of this demographic crisis arouse great anxiety; the decline of fecundity in the women is one of the reasons, the most important one perhaps, for the hostility of the men toward the women.

168 The grounds given for such a situation [100] have a double aspect, modernist and traditionalist. The grounds of the former were displayed at the time of the Pabouin Congress of 1947 and also by certain groupings at the time of the movement for regrouping clans. They are expressed by definite claims, such as demanding a health program and education in hygiene, a desire to control and then limit prostitution, to consolidate the "family" by limiting divorce and curbing adultery, a need for rich crops "that can be sold in order to support the family," (1) etc. The grounds of the

168
186
1. Statement by a Dignitary of the
Yémōng Tribe, Mitzié, 1949.

traditionalists without doubt compel recognition and represent the opinion of the greatest number. They reveal a strong reaction to the present state of Fang society and a desire to return to a past when everything was better, when there were "a great many men and a great many children"; they express a tendency toward "counter-acculturation." The upheavals that have occurred in

64
551 Incidentally, the method of naming peculiar to the Fang is evidence of a fundamental social segment, the group of brothers, real and half (siblings and half-siblings). Thus there are the sons of Bitògò Òkwò who form the "heads" of four minor lineages still in existence:



The names themselves emphasize this double orientation, the vertical showing the real filiation and the horizontal showing the real brotherhood, which characterizes Fang social structure. Around such a horizontal segment the village (in this particular case Sam village) is constituted, and inside such a segment are produced the fission giving birth to separate lineages. From the clan to the minor lineage the groupings must be defined in terms of these two dimensions, thus showing a structure that could be called both segmental and interlocked.

- 614 But this overlapping is not sufficient to bind the groupings
 ● 578 together and to impose a hierarchy. Ruptures have been frequent
 621 and can be explained by the mechanism of Fang expansion, by economic factors, and by causes of a structural nature. By analyzing the lineages settled at the level of a fixed region, one notes that those whose origin goes back to an eldest son (ntòl-mòt) are larger in number and are the basis of the local population. The Yèngwí studied above show this very specifically:

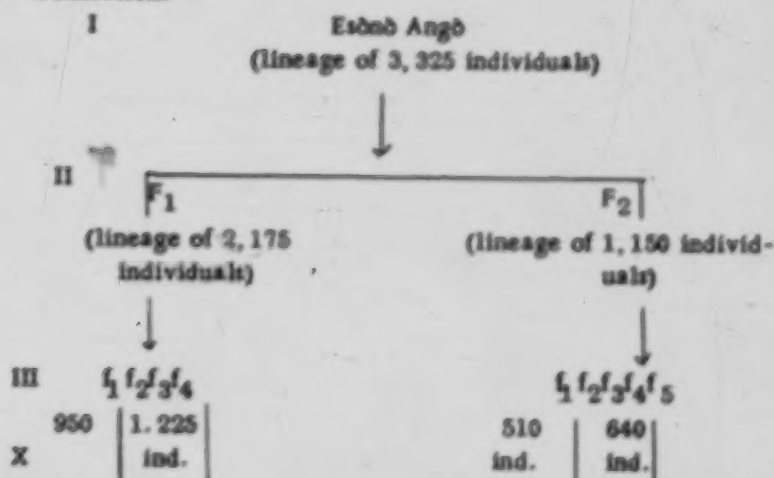
618 [112]

578

621

Generations

Yängwi in the Vicinity of Oyem



Each of the definitely located clan fragments reveals the existence of two groupings which are in a state of latent antagonism, which is shown, geographically, by the separate villages. The cleavage is such that at the time of the recent movement for regrouping villages, initiated entirely by the natives, each of the two antinomic elements refused to join together in order to create larger and more modernized village units. (1) Every time the

1. At the time of our investigation of a Kôjé grouping, for example, most of our informants asserted tirelessly that "the village will break apart if all the Kôjé mingled together."

fission has been carried out between lineages issued from an "eldest" and the lineages issued from younger brothers. The five clan groupings studied in the Oyem region revealed this rupture - going back to the time of their settlement in the country - with irrefutable clarity (see Table V).

Table V

614
• 578
621

Clans	Groupings descended from the eldest	Groupings descended from younger son or sons	Villages corresponding to the first grouping	Villages corresponding to the second grouping
Yégnwi	Lineage of Mòndmògò Ésonò	Lineage of Naim Esòbò	Ebiàne, etc...	Zorongone, etc...
Effak	Lineage of Ngu Māmvé	Lineage of Mòndu Māmvé	Nto, etc..	Mékomo, etc...
Olip	Lineage of Enduma Esua	Lineage of Emvélé	Nkang	Mbenga, etc...
Yébimvé	Lineage of Ekòrò Méfi	Lineage of Obiré Méfi	Aféname, etc...	Angone, etc...
Kojé	Lineage of Mòzògò Mòmbé	Lineages of five younger sons	Nto, etc...	Mbomo, etc...

[113] This state of tension, bringing about more or less real fissions, is bound up with a social organization which gives economic and political pre-eminence to the "eldest," [sons] which favors the lineages issued from them, and which, above all, is not hierarchic for the purpose of maintaining the cohesion of groupings, except as needed for defense and expansion, and except for the prestige of temporary "chiefs." The desire for independence manifested by the heads of lineages as soon as their grouping has become fairly large is not controlled in an organized manner. Studies conducted during the first years of this century, especially those of Martrou and Trilles, all insist on the process of fragmentation of

614 lineages which is more marked as the Fang become unattached
 578 conquerors. In the same way frequent examples have been given
 621 of extensive agglomerations being broken up after the death of the
 "chief" who had founded and maintained them. The size and
 cohesion of the groupings appear therefore in a large measure to
 depend on the personality of the leaders who have asserted them-
 selves (for any rightful succession may be contested under pretext
 of incapacity, or it may be refused) and on circumstances. This
 explains in part the frequency of fissions observed by various
 authors at the level of the third or fourth generation. (1) The size

1. Particularly, E. Tressenem, "Notes
 ethnographiques sur les tribus Fan du
 Moyen-Ogooué [Ethnographic Notes on
 the Fang Tribes of the Middle Ogooué],"
op. cit.

of localized groupings may therefore vary a great deal -- especially
 since the pacification of the country -- going from the major lineage
 expressed in "clan patches" to the minor lineage (nd'è bô) form-
 ing an isolated hamlet.

Kinship

612 Our analysis of Fang society has so far considered groupings
 only in terms of two fundamental elements: paternal filiation and
real fraternity. We must now examine the bonds created and the
 relations prescribed by other modalities of kinship, as well as by the
 alliances that may exist between "foreign" groupings as a result
 of marriages.

612 Through the medium of his father (ésa, whom he calls tağa)
 601 and of his mother (nya, whom he calls nanô), the individual be-
 longs to two kinship groupings, the paternal (ésinyâg) and the ma-
 ternal (dzânanô). For the young Fang these two have neither the
 same significance nor the same importance. [114] The course of
 his life will generally be spent in the midst of the first group,
 while he has only incidental relations with the "relatives." of the
 second group. It is from the first that he receives his clan affilia-
 tion. The fundamental relations of paternal kinship are governed,

583 of the alliance. (9)

584

3. Cf., on the importance of these facts of reciprocity and their role in so-called primitive societies, the remarkable work of C. Lévi-Strauss devoted to the study of Structures élémentaires de la Parenté [Elementary Structures of Kinship], Paris, 1949.

581

583 between groupings which, without the obligation of exogamy, would
● 578 have lived as so many biological, economic, and political units
585 retired within themselves. [124] It compels co-operation; it

creates zones of security in a country where, at a time of conquest, the economic competition is severe (as regards the best land for cultivation and hunting, and the trade centers and roads). In addition the double exogamy multiplies these abé bonds, and the specific recognition of the maternal kinship reinforces, as we have suggested, these bonds. The circulation of women and in a parallel direction that of the bride prices have to be minutely regulated. This function belongs to the head of the nd'é bôt, to the niöl, the latter signifying not only "ancient" but also "arbitrer, envoy, ambassador." He is custodian of wealth and giver of women. At the level of the segment of brothers (bobēnāg), the principle that bride prices received at the time of the marriage of daughters are used to marry the sons in the order of their birth is completed by the obligation of the eldest brother to contribute to the formation of a bride price necessary for the marriage of the younger brother who does not benefit by such a compensation. Certainly this principle which was meant to regulate the distribution of the women and to limit competition has not turned out to be infallible. Antagonisms between the "eldest" [brothers] and younger brothers leading to the breaking up of groupings are often explained by this obligation not being met. (1) The oldest men can take advantage of their pre-

1. Cf. supra, pp. 112-113.

eminence in order to buy up the greatest number of wives. Finally,

581 the younger brothers are often tempted to collect for themselves
563 the elements of a bride price or to carry out rapes or raids. They
● 578 represent the most dynamic and mobile fraction of the grouping. (2)
515

2. Probably their lineages represent the major part of the Fang population of Lower Gabon. This would help to explain, apart from "modernist" reasons, the more or less pronounced rivalry and antagonisms between the "Fang from above" and the "Fang from below."

However, the earliest observations show that there was a sort of limited polygamy. Fournes writes: "The Pahouin is in fact most often monogamous, simply because the woman is very highly priced," (3) and Dr. Cureau more specifically states: "Among the

3. A. Fournes, op. cit., p. 77.

Fang where a wife is expensive, the maximum rarely goes above five; apparently thirty years ago, only the very rich could rise to one or two units above humiliating monogamy." (4) These two

4. Dr. A. Cureau, op. cit., p. 119.

authors confirm the existence of a restricted polygamy and therefore of a tendency to equalize the distribution of the women which, according to them, is allied with the high cost of bride prices.

583 [128] It is now time to analyze the material nature of the bride price. During the nineteenth century it consisted essentially of iron objects & representations of assagais, Pahouin knives, and axes very reduced in size), of which the bikki are the best known, (1)

1. Cf. M.H. Kingsley, op. cit.; the ancient word for bride price is bikki, or nawa bikki.

reserved exclusively for matrimonial exchanges, and of animals,

621 participation in the same tasks, tends - if one may venture the
 562 play on words - to the confusion of its members. On the other
 571 hand, the women it controls do not form such a coherent whole;
 they represent different clans, different modalities of kinship;
 they are the center of virtual conflicts (between female "relatives"
 and female "relations by marriage," between co-wives); except
 for the wives of the same man, who live together, they do not
 have a common living place.

621 The nd'è bôt - and, more precisely, this virile whole made
 571 up of relatives belonging to the same guardhouse (abēñō) - harbors,
 ● 578 however, latent antagonisms, which are the result of the privilege
 614 linked with ancestry [133] or seniority. These tensions can come
 to a head when disputes arise usually from economic causes, such
 as circulation of wealth or of women, or allocation of farming land.
 They help to explain the very variable size of the groupings con-
 sidered as villages, and the phenomena of aggregation and disinte-
 gration of the latter according to circumstances. But both of these
 movements are effected as a function of the minor lineage which
 is the nd'è bôt.

621 This grouping may by itself constitute a separate unit of about
 571 ten persons or a village with up to a hundred inhabitants. When a
 614 village is old, with a large population (200 to 300 persons or more),
 it cannot remain organized around a single common hearth. It is
 arranged around several centers corresponding to the sons of the
 founder or their successors. Thus the village of Ebiane (Yéngwi
 in the vicinity of Oyem) has 235 inhabitants distributed in three
 groups representing the respective posterity of three brothers. We
 have already stressed the fact that the heads of minor lineages are
 at the level of the same segment. The village of Afénane (Yébinvé
 of the Oyem region) with more than 300 inhabitants also consists
 of the posterity of three brothers, and each of the nd'è bôt occupies
 a definite position on the village street, according to the following
 diagram:



621 The groupings are located according to the order of their
 571 pre-eminence, that of the eldest being at the back in direct con-
 614 tact with the chief's hut. Also, grouping 1 does not represent
 the whole of the lineage descended from the eldest brother
 (Ekòrò Ngòm); the latter divided at the level of the sons of Ekòrò
 Ngòm into three elements, of which one is at Afénane and the two
 others make up the very close villages of Menia (139 inhabitants)
 and M'Fagne (97 inhabitants).

621 This whole Yéhimvé group, consisting in a limited area of
 571 nearly 1,000 persons, is interesting to the extent that it shows
 578 how the "major" lineages (which we have described above under
 614 the name of abial è bôt) and the "minor" ones determine residence
 in a definite zone and a village. Two brothers led a migratory
 group [134] of Yéhimvé from the Cameroons to the territory oc-
 cupied today by their posterity. A conflict arising from the un-
 equal distribution of the women acquired from foreign villages
 lead to the first rupture. Each of the two brothers moved away
 with the group he controlled, and the memory of past antagonisms
 has remained sufficiently alive to prevent any attempt today at
 recombining the members.

621 The initial cleavage can be presented in the following man-
 571 ner: (Table VII on following page.)

614 The cleavage is expressed in relation to a common origin (A)
 which represents the head of the "major" lineage and gives rise
 to the first rupture which we mark with a double line. The two
nd'è bôt have separated and settled in spite of all in adjacent
 regions. But these groupings have themselves been subject to new
 fragmentations since then. We represent the second of these where
 they occur [135] at the level of the third generations (after III, V,
 and VII), giving rise to the creation of villages very close to one
 another and able to co-operate and, above all, to regroup if re-
 quired by circumstances.

These observations show that the nd'è bôt is a true residential
 unit. They show how the cleavage becomes possible as soon as this
 unit reaches a certain size (a size, from the point of view of security
 and economic demands, making it viable as a separate unit); but
 the distance (in the sociological sense) between fragments varies

554 representing not simply the various minor lineages but open to
 622 competitive authorities — the best warrior (éyènö), a rich man (nkuma), the cleverest at settling palavers (nté bété), not to mention the dignitaries of the "associations." In the traditional society, the possession of the biéri basket established the right of the eldest's pre-eminence and gave this right a sacred basis [139] it was a partial guarantee against the struggles for prestige. With the disappearance of this cult under the influence of the colonizers, the eldest must use the new "associations" or must make himself feared by having recourse to techniques of a magical order; otherwise he will find himself threatened as "chief" at the time of a competition which is implied by the Fang social logic.

554 The role of personal prestige appears clearly in studying the vocabulary, which has a considerable number of words or expressions applicable to the "important" or "honored" man: éguma (from gum, to honor), muramo(r) (t) and fâm ndên (from mura and ndên, great or important), nkurödi (very important man), mfum (well-known man, who has many relations), nkuma (already quoted, a man who is influential because of his wealth), etc. The authority acquired by such prestige limits the essential authority which we have shown to be dependent on seniority, but tradition also imposes strict restraints on it as well. Any pre-eminence acquired by virtue of purely personal merit is dangerous for the one who holds it, for it is essential that power, wealth, and wisdom be placed at the service of all members of the grouping.

554 Many early authors have pointed out the risk of displaying
 578 an affluence and a prosperity that are not shared. Le Testu emphasizes the role played by "the fear of exciting jealousy": "Larger and more successful plantations, a better hut, wives that are more fertile, more prosperous affairs... each is a cause for jealousy, and the consequence of this feeling, as is often believed to be true, is the death of the one who excites it" (1) Similarly, M.

1. Le Testu, Le N'gwéna [The N'gwéna], Bulletin de la Société des Recherches Congolaises, Vol. 12, 1930.

554 Briault, an accurate observer of the Fang states that the death of
 578 a chief, or an old man, or a notable person, is suspect and demands a much more "minute" enquiry than in the case of men of the common people. "Whoever has privileges is envied, whoever exerts authority makes malcontents; many chiefs have died unexpectedly; many who were envied have not made old bones; this must be fairly common since it is confirmed by proverbs (2). . . ."

2. M. Briault, Sur les pistes de
l'A. E. F. [On the Trails of French
 Equatorial Africa], 1948, pp. 37-
 38, 42-43.

One might say that "intentional death" threatens (threatened rather, for colonial affairs and peace have allowed some to grow rich and to be protected) those who in their own interest disregard the fundamental solidarity and leveling tendency.

631 [140] By this play of forces, more or less antagonistic and varying according to circumstances, Fang society is protected from any excessive concentration of power. This explains why, in spite of its conquering military nature, it has never allowed even a rudimentary feudal system to appear. Strictly controlled, power was organized only at the level of small units — a village or a group of villages, relatives or neighbors. It has only exceptionally (and precariously) gone beyond the frontiers of these groupings, and as the "associations" have barely been able to remedy this deficiency, Fang society shows an absolute lack of centralization, which was a contributing factor in its rapid deterioration during the colonial period.

692 In a social system which leaves plenty of room for opposing relationships, cases of judicial action and conciliation play an important part. The Fang have not only established a classification
 [673] of offenses — nté, simple disagreement; étôm, serious dispute that might result in war; and nsém, ritual infraction —
 [681] and a gradation of punishments going up to holding a hostage (étéa), but have also conceived a judicial organization with

562 except in a sporadic and very degenerate form; we mention the
795 N'nup with a whole string of "queens" that has appeared in the
neighboring regions of Spanish Guinea.

562 This ambiguity in the position of woman to a certain extent
● 578 creates an equilibrium. On the other hand, from the point of
837 view of sentimental relations, this is not true. The man who ad-
mits that marriage should be regulated primarily in terms of social
considerations hopes to obtain some day a "favorite" wife and has
little fear of sanctions connected with adultery. The woman,
married young, remains prisoner of the system and is always
threatened with severe sanctions. Apparently this results in the
many disputes which were referred to by the first administrators.
"Very often the woman abandons her husband and returns to her
parents' village or follows a man of her choice..." (Archives
of Libreville, 1909). They were also referred to by the first
Fang scholars: "The Pahouin woman does not hesitate to leave
with a lover; often married against her wishes she avenges [152]
this state of things by a very great infidelity" (L. Mba, op. cit.).
The expression used by this author is significant. What might be
called the sentimental excuse permits a broader reaction respond-
ing to frustrations of another nature. We must see there the sign
of tensions which are actualized at the only possible level. Let us
add that the conditions created by colonization will liberate these
tensions to a great extent by destroying the equilibrium obtained
approximately by traditional means.

561 These tensions are not the only ones to be mended. Between
578 generations, that of the ésa and that of the mwanö, on the same
784 segment between the eldest and the younger brothers, it appears
that relationships of dependency can turn into antagonisms. Soon
[55] after his birth the young boy is "marked" by his ascendants, re-
ceiving a double name (essential in relation to other denominations)
which contains the name of an ancestor of his paternal line (of a
mvam) and the first term of his father's name. In addition to
individual interdicts imposed by his father, the child is subject to
various general interdicts which are removed by degrees as the child
becomes a man. Thus, there is the interdict on the pig (1), and on

1. The pig appears as a valuable animal

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● 578
784

in all this part of central Africa,
where the ox is unknown because of
trypanosomiasis.

the produce of hunting and fishing, and these exist until the time
of puberty. They signify, according to L. Martrou, that in the
family group there should be "no useless mouth," ... "but rather
arms and hearts capable of defending and enriching it." (2) Thus

2. L. Martrou, *Les "Ékis" des*
Mfang [The "Ékis" of the Fang]
op. cit.

[834] it is forbidden to cohabit with a woman before being circumcized (3)

3. V. Largeau, op. cit. article:
Interdit [Interdict].

561
578
[852]
881

In the same way various rites mark the steps of this ascent: the
rite of the Ssò for the ten-year-old children; (4) circumcision,

4. M. Bertaut in his thesis on the
Boulou of the Cameroons, a related
nation, speaks of a less degraded
form of the Ssò which was the cen-
ter of a true "society of men" now
almost vanished.

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which is not accompanied by any initiation (but seems rather to
bear public witness to virility and to show the individual as an
active male), and above all, the "revelation" of the Biéri. When
the young man joins the company of men, he has experienced in
various degrees of intensity [153] this biological, social, and
spiritual dependence on his ancestors (mvam) and on his elders
(nyamòrò). To them he owes his life, his security, his social
existence. Even after having crossed the various steps and being
able to take full part in the assembly of men, he receives from

561 them various interdicts that testify to his new state and remind
 578 him of the obligation to submit to those who have made him a
 885 man, a complete Fang. (1)

1. Cf. M. Briault, op. cit., pp.
 183-184.

561 For a long time he submits to this superiority of his elders,
 885 who intervene with the ancestors, the source of prosperity and
 888 power, "who permit him to fulfill and increase himself by marriage and the possession of posterity, by controlling the circulation of bride prices and women. Thus the male life curve reaches a maximum which corresponds to the social influence of the nyamòrò, decreases as old age approaches (we have already stressed the tendency in the past to discard the "grandfather," mvam), and increases infinitely after death, which gives him the quality of "ancestor" with limitless power on behalf of the living. Childhood and old age, representing the "low" points of this curve, are preparation for the two "high" states which are characterized by an increase in power and autonomy.

561 In ancient Fang society dependence guaranteed material
 578 and spiritual security. It was centered on the relation between
 182 the begetter (ésa) and the begotten (émò wâm) rather than on that between the dominating one and the one dominated. We have frequently stressed the leveling tendency existing in the heart of the nd'è bôt and the dangers threatening any pre-eminence acquired by personal right. The just distribution of women, wealth, and tasks is expected from the "eldest," not any domination. In another respect, during the period of conquest, attempts at domination and the establishment of excessive personal power were limited by the important role of the "warrior" (who best incarnates the qualities which caused Dr. Cureau to compare the Fang to "modern Spartans") and the threats of rupture in the heart of a grouping which needed to remain sufficiently large and coherent. An equilibrium may arise between the power of the "eldest ones" (religious and political pre-eminence) and the power of the young men (martial pre-eminence). It involves particularly the rigid regulation of the circulation of the women, the possibility for these

561 young men to go beyond the level of simple dependence to be-
 578 come, in their turn, creators of dependence, and the possibility
 182 [154] of "capitalizing" human lives (women and descendants).
 This equilibrium has been upset and competition disorganized
 by the passage from warlike to economic conquest, then to an
 agricultural economy in which the woman plays a fundamental
 part, and the pacification which no longer permits the lack of
 women to be remedied by raids. Capitalization of women and
 capitalization of property are then bound together, the former
 becoming to a great extent the condition of the latter. The role
 of the "rich" man (nkumakuma) is increasing; (1) relations be-

1. To such an extent that Bertaut
 notes that among the Cameroons
 Boulou, who have been longer sub-
 ject to a modern economy, there is
 only one word nkuma to designate
 the chief of village groupings.

tween generations, between "eldest sons" and "younger sons,"
 may become that between possessors (women, property, and po-
 litical role) and nonpossessors. Dependence tends to take on the
 characteristics of a domination creating tensions and conflicts.

784 We have been able to define a certain number of points of
 626 equilibrium in the heart of ancient Fang society. We must now
 specify the important position held by the system of interdicts
 (biki) in social control. According to M. Briault the word éki
 (plural, biki) comes from the root ki meaning: "force, restraint,
 virility, power"; it expresses a ritual prohibition, an interdict
 or taboo; it designates "a person or thing marked with a sacred
 character with whom or with which contact or use are forbidden."
 This author considers the éki essentially from the point of view of
 the restraint they exercise and of the social order which they help
 to maintain. He writes: "They give rather the idea of an effec-
 tive means of keeping youth, women ... in short, all in the so-
 ciety who are made to obey, in a spirit of subjection to those whose
 will is of importance ... political interest is doubled and made

244

in 1954 in connection with a study of family budgets.

amount of food necessary to maintain the population: a crop census was taken in 1948 in one of the Sangmélima cantons (2). In order to

[43]

2. Report of the administrative officer, J. M. Soupault. An average individual's requirement would be: 250 maize plants, 330 manioc plants, 130 plantains, 110 macabo, 7 kilograms of rice, and 32 kilograms of groundnuts.

satisfy the needs of 6, 249 inhabitants there is no "exportation" to speak of. The canton used to produce 1, 635, 000 maize plants, 2, 049, 000 manioc, 824, 190 plantain bananas, 687, 800 macabo. It furthermore provided 44 tons of rice, 200 tons of groundnuts. There were 85, 180 fruit trees producing various kinds of fruit (Pachylobes /Canarium edule Hooker, known as assa in Pahouin country—Ed. /, Estuils, oranges, etc.)

Clearing land by burning and the absence of organic fertilizer probably explain the exhaustion of the soil and the shifting cultivation that results from it.

231

The breeding and rearing of small animals is nevertheless understood and practiced: goats, dogs, fowls, pigs were and still are plentiful in the villages. These animals do not seem to contribute

[43]

much to the food supply nor to the economic life. The very limited practice of selling pieces of pork has dates from recent years. As a

[43]

matter of fact, animals were useful for giving quasi-ritual presents, for paying bride prices, and for celebrating family occasions: at a marriage, burial, and the end of mourning, two or three goats were killed to provide food for the relatives.

[43]

Of course, these animals are not stabled or fed; the herds wander along the outskirts of villages and do not fail to plunder the gardens.

• 57

There are innumerable classic quarrels between farmers and herders (with the slight difference here that no one is exclusively a herder nor exclusively a farmer): Was the practice of enclosing by hedges es-

357

established so as to avoid such depredations, or to give military protection to the settlements? Whatever the origin, this practice associated with the raising of animals would have made it possible to avoid

586 made, but this practice is only very rarely followed in cases of free
851 union, ébon, even when that is followed by a regular marriage of the
848 natural parents. Illegitimate children, fruits of an ébon, bobengon,
are kept in their mother's clan, where, moreover, they rank socially
only after legitimate children.

597 There used to exist a kind of adoption, rare today, of a political
614 rather than family nature, which could almost be defined as naturaliza-
641 tion. It could only be carried out by the head of an extended family
on behalf of an orphan, mone nyui, of another clan (orphans within
/56/ the clan being, of course, already considered children of the
head of the family). The adopted child, abiaé môsô (i.e., "conceived
[833] in the daytime," sexual relations being lawful only between sundown
and sunrise), came into the clan with a status analogous to that of
the monengon. He remained subject to the marriage prohibitions of
his clan of origin.

609 A non-Pahouin outsider permanently residing in a village, a ntabe,
614 may benefit through marriage by alliance, élat, which does not there-
by make him a member of the clan. He becomes a monekal (sister's
son, uterine relative) and his children, though legitimate, belong to
their mother's clan.

593 The descent relationship may be broken by paternal or maternal
578 curse, meyo'é: the parent uttering the curse shows the child his
sexual organs, "the place whence he came," while pronouncing a
formula oath. The curse is supposed to bring misfortune and death
to the offspring accursed, whom everyone avoids. It can only be
[783] lifted by a collective purificatory rite (étye, tyô) in which the whole
nda bôt participates.

3. Age Grades

561 The individual's life cycle is marked by a certain number of
transitions, which are accompanied, or were usually accompanied, by
rites that will be discussed further on (p. 115). These crises are birth,
weaning, puberty, attaining majority, marriage, death. Age
grades correspond to the intermediate stages; they are less strictly
defined today than formerly.

561 I do not know the exact word for fetus: people say abum, belly.
843 There must be a more precise term, but I think there is a prohibiton
connected with it, certainly as regards men, although it may now be

422 brought produce of the locality, the system of directions very probably being ascribed to sexual categories, the northeast area, male and the southwest area, female. It would be advisable to know more about the ritual use of different tools and implements in order to throw more light on the subject. We know that the saber, fa, is essentially male, that the hunting bell tied to a dog's neck, angôn, is essentially female, that the drum-telephone, nkul, is androgynous (though women are not allowed to use it); the rifle, ngal, is probably epicene, and the same is true for a few other objects, but we know almost nothing about the effect of this sexual differentiation upon property and its conveyance.

In any case, since the introduction of a money economy, personal property /propriété mobilière/ has become almost entirely individual. Personal property /meubles/ that remains collective is primarily so by appropriation, like the equipment of associations, the profits of their subscriptions, sometimes objects bought in common by members of a family because of their cost or function—like the sewing machines obtained from Spanish Guinea after the last war, for instance.

422 593 Personal property still involves some restrictions for women and young men, although they are less and less accepted. Respectful sons and submissive wives still allow their fathers and husbands to use the objects acquired by the earnings of their labor, but when they rebel the trend of the courts is increasingly in their favor. However, the obligatory aid arising from family ties still holds good, and to refuse to "lend" something to a monyañ is likely to be frowned on, which is a serious matter. Thus there survives a kind of right of collective family use working against individual /ownership of/ personal property.

g. Inheritance, Guardianship

422 578 These come about from death or disappearance. A paternal curse did not entail loss of civil rights, but the possessions left behind by an accursed son who quit his village were confiscated and divided among his brothers.

422 765 The disposal of possessions left by a dead man, called elik from lik = to leave, took place at the end of the period of mourning, meyep, perhaps /77/ a mbu, six months after death. This waiting period tends to become shorter and in towns usually lasts a month,

The skin of a bush cat is part of the *biang-akamayong* called "Nsin."

The Mrang.—A triangular piece of iron filled with medicine, used to keep away witches, is also part of the *biang-akamayong*. 789
619

Biang-akong or *biang-abal* (war medicine).—This is also part of the *biang-akamayong*, and the shots from the guns of an enemy are of no avail.

One other important fetish hangs with the *biang-akamayong*.

A piece of very hard wood. Only a certain kind of woman is selected to find this wood; she is called a special or *selected* woman on account of certain peculiarities connected with her, e.g., she always fails to catch fish, she may try all day but will not succeed in catching fish. The husband of such a woman, after intercourse with her, fails to catch fish the next day, he also fails to work. This is the kind of woman always selected to find this wood; it is hard wood, she is a hard woman, and she is called *Bmunega* *ane alert* (the woman who is hard). This medicine is also called *biang-akong*, and shot from the guns of an enemy will not harm. (77)
(824)

This is the *Biang-akamayong*.

XIII.—*Witchcraft. Evus. (Witch.)*

If a person goes out to make witch (witch medicine, or play witch to harm others) he dies. The people take him to the backyard. Other people say, "We want to take the witch." If the corpse is a female, they open the belly. If the corpse is a male, they open the heart. They see the witch, they take it. If they bring the witch, they lay it on the smoke shelf. It dries. When finished drying they say, "We will use it as medicine." 754

This is *Evus* (witch).

Cursing dead Relations.—Written at Foulabifong, Nkomo river, April 13th, 1898. Told me by Ôvôn; fully confirmed by Ogandaga and Interpreter Roby.

Ekanesong (to curse dead relations).—This is a Fang custom. A man has a palaver with another, or goods stolen. He desires to get even with the thief. He calls a friend and curses his friend's dead relations, saying, 754
578
626

"Go and kill that person for me, or go and make him pay me goods; if you do so, I will then pay you for having cursed your dead relations." It is a serious matter to have dead relations cursed, and the friend feels very bad. He must do as bid, or he is branded as a coward, and after he has completed his task he then makes claim for payment.

Nge me bā jam dili, nge me ta minbin (If I do it, may I see the corpses [of my people]). A Fang way of swearing an oath. (539)

Ami ye mimbin mia, yinga me bat (My friend, by the corpses of your relations, kill those people for me).

Notes on *Ebōmeda* (a curse).

Ilong s'ayoge (a curse that kills).

- 754 Vazege me ilong onga lóm me (Take away the curse you have [sent] put
 578 upon me).
 626 Vazege me bibomeda (Take away the curse).
 539 Vazege me biyoge (Take away the curse).
 Bót bene mbóméda é Anyambe édjám é mam mbé móa (People are cursed of
 God on account of their sins).

XIV.—*The Ngi. (A Fang Secret Society.)*

575

To members (*Bemvon*) the following things or *bityi* are forbidden:—
Bityi:—

1. To go and make or play at witch (make *crus*).
2. A male fowl is not to be eaten (shared) by two men of different clans.
3. Fish called *ngole* must not be partaken of with a woman.
4. Only the initiated are permitted to eat the fish called *ngone*.
5. Only the initiated may witness the Ngi dances. A woman who attempts to witness an Ngi dance will sicken and die.
6. Only the initiated must know about the bones used by Ngi.
7. A member of the Ngi society is not permitted to sleep on his back.
8. Food refuse must not be destroyed by fire.
9. To spit in the fire is against the law of Ngi (not permitted).
10. An uninitiated person will die if embraced by an Ngi.
11. To kick over rotten wood, logs, or forest stumps, is forbidden.
12. To cut a stick half through in the bush, and then bring it to town and break it, is forbidden. It must be cut through and the two pieces carried.
13. To kick the feet together after getting in bed, for the purpose of removing dust, is forbidden.

The violation of any of these mentioned *bityi* will bring misfortune and death on the *bemvon* (member).

Ngi means gorilla among the Fang; Nji means gorilla among the Bulu. The Bulu have the Nji secret society, which is reported as being precisely similar to the Fang Ngi; it came to the Bulu from the Fang.

XV.—*War.*

726 During a tribal war all adults act as warriors. There is no regular organisation of fighting men. It is a typical guerilla warfare. Parties of young men go forth at night to attack towns; others watch the forest paths to shoot men passing and women going to work in the gardens. The Fang are noted for their love of war; they are the most warlike people in all West Africa. When a tribal war is on, a headman frequently goes out with a raiding party to attack the town; he carries with him the *biang-akamayong* (protecting medicine of the tribe). The usual mode of attack is as follows: Having decided to attack a town, the party of men (usually ten or